

GLITS



vol ii



a zine by Shapeless Press

GUTS

Table of Contents

Preface by Glen K. Rodman	.....page 1
"bathroom prayers," by Mars Yocom	.....page 3
"The Blood," by Daisy Thursday	.....page 4
"Tesco Value," by worm in the whiskey	.....page 7
"Holy (after Allen Ginsberg)," by Nora Laine Herzog	.....page 8
"an experiment (holobiont)," by dash pinheiro	.....page 10
"Searching The Past for Answers // The Lady from Llyn y Fan Fach," by Isaac Sinclair	.....page 12
"The Wild World of of Long-Dog and Pudd," by SG Egan	.....page 13
"Dirtfag Is An Empty Apartment," by Calum Robertson	.....page 14
"forward this email to at least ten people or else She will come for You, too," by Melisa Ferati	.....page 17
"Vessel," by Hanon Gordon	.....page 18
From "Tot to Cox," by teniola funmi	.....page 20
"Explosive Dreaming," by moon đặng	.....page 23



Preface / Glen K. Rodman, Editor

Look, I don't have to explain the urgency of Trans art. If you're reading this, you already feel it.

You probably wake up in the morning with it twisting your guts like a clenched fist. Maybe some days, the good ones, you read a great book or meet up with friends and you get to forget a little bit and live your life. But most days, there's a new headline. Some jackass at the New York Times or the Guardian hits post on their insipid thinkpiece, and picks away the scab that they just won't let heal. "Too political," says the rejection email in your inbox, "too controversial, too niche. We just don't think this pitch has a broad appeal. It won't resonate with our target audience."

Meanwhile, our people are dying. Whether by sudden violence or the methodical criminalization of transness and inaccessibility of medical and legal transition, we are being murdered by our neighbors and our governments. And every single day, we must survive not only this violence, but the grief it leaves us with. The loss of friends who still had so much left to do, so much more to be. My friend Cora should still be here. If she were, I'd be in her DMs pestering her to write something for this zine. I'm so angry that I will never get to read what she would have written.

Preface (cont'd) / Glen K. Rodman, Editor

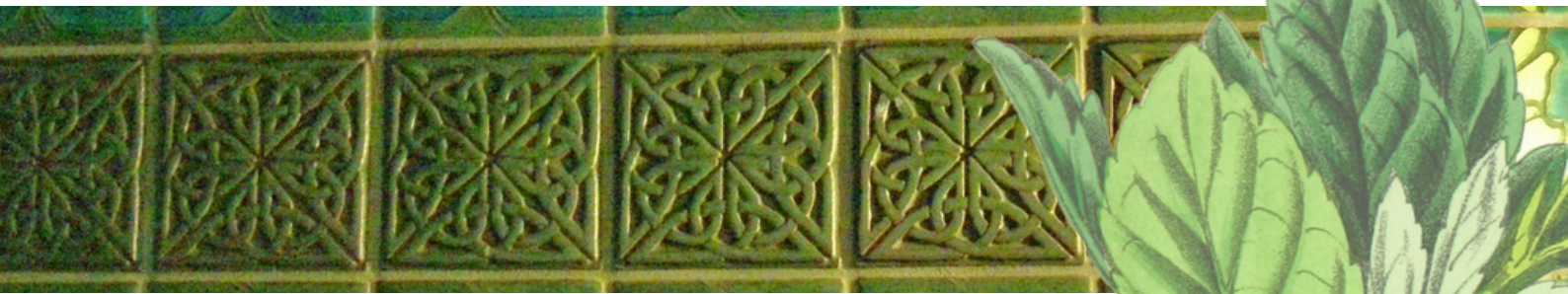
We all feel the urgency. Some days it hurts too much to do anything at all. Some days it gets us out of bed and into the streets to protest and organize. Some days it explodes out of us in words, pictures and song. When we take that urgency and make something with it, we're doing something more than surviving. We're creating a dialogue apart from the sanctified monolith of derision and complacency that most insist to be consensus reality. A dialogue in which our rage is understood, our pain is not dismissed, our grief is shared, our joy affirms and our self-expression inspires.

When we make something for and share it with our Trans community, we have the opportunity to learn more about ourselves, to build relationships of care, and to help others get free. In GUTS, you'll meet Trans and Nonbinary folks from all over the US, the UK and Canada, creating urgent art in every printable medium.

My commitment to publishing and distributing this work keeps me getting up out of bed every day, because I know that we need it. That's my promise to you: keep writing, keep drawing, keep sending it to me, and I'll keep printing it. Let's make something together.

Love & Solidarity,
Glen K. Rodman





"bathroom prayers" / Mars Yocom

I spent my younger years praying in the bathroom,
scraping my pink knees raw and finger nails bloody,
sending an sos to any god who could hear.

Praying with my fingers in my mouth, dragging harsh
lines across all the parts of me I would throw away if
I could, all that softness in a death grip, bruising
myself into something new.

Scoring lines under my breasts, and tearing my
fingernails off in strips, destroying myself in a million
small ways.

Praying with my hands clasped tight and belly aching,
begging pleading, make me disappear, make me
anything else, please please please.

Make me pretty, make me small, make me nothing,
please god make me anything but me anything but this.
I'll spend my whole life here on my knees in this white
tiled room, give my body as communion, stare up at
the sky and send up to heaven all my bathroom
prayers, and I hope you'll send some back.

"The Blood" / Daisy Thursday

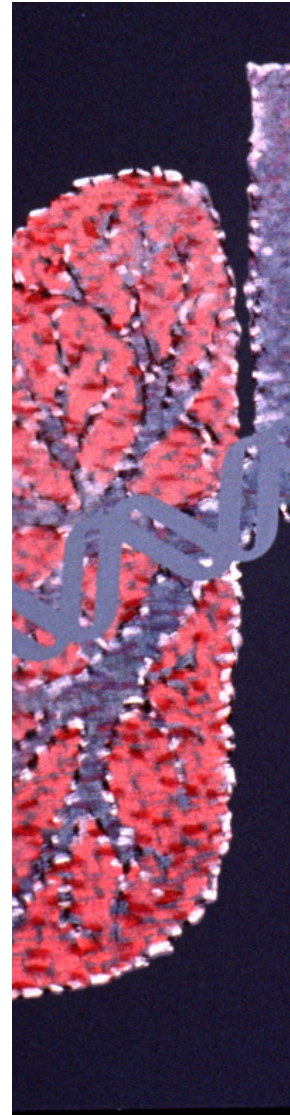
The bloodstain on the shirt Cassanova Valentine wore the last time he wrestled was still there and it wasn't supposed to be, because his next show was in an hour. His uniform needed to appear good as new, never bled in, as his blood was the surprise of the evening. The grand finale of the Blood Pageant. He was furiously washing the blood out of his shirt in the bathroom sink of the punk bar when I exited the stall in a cocktail dress and heels. We stared at each other, stunned for vastly different reasons, and said awkward hellos.

Valentine is the ringmaster of New Fear City, a Brooklyn based wrestling collective specializing in the Deathmatch. What exactly deathmatch wrestling is can be hard to pin down, which is intentional- think of it as WWE but with makeshift weapons, blood, gore, and no ring. The action takes place on the floor of the bar. Stunt show meets body modification meets underground art show.

"The blood..." Cassanova tells me during our interview five months after our meeting, "The blood... is because I like it."

A Pro Wrestling obsessed kid grows into a college football player who works doors at nightclubs in Brooklyn. Shot at. Stabbed. Typical occupational hazards. He enrolls in pro-wrestling school and wrestles the indies for 5 years as the Hipster Heartthrob. Well-lit matches in middle school auditoriums aren't doing it for him so he hangs up the tights. Wrestler, no more.

Years later he organizes an art show in Brooklyn with some friends. Paintings, sculpture and he finishes the whole thing off with a last minute wrestling show in the middle of an art gallery.



He introduces elements of “backyard wrestling” a style utilizing real violence combined with stage combat theatrics to produce real gore- what he calls The Deathmatch, a style that takes off

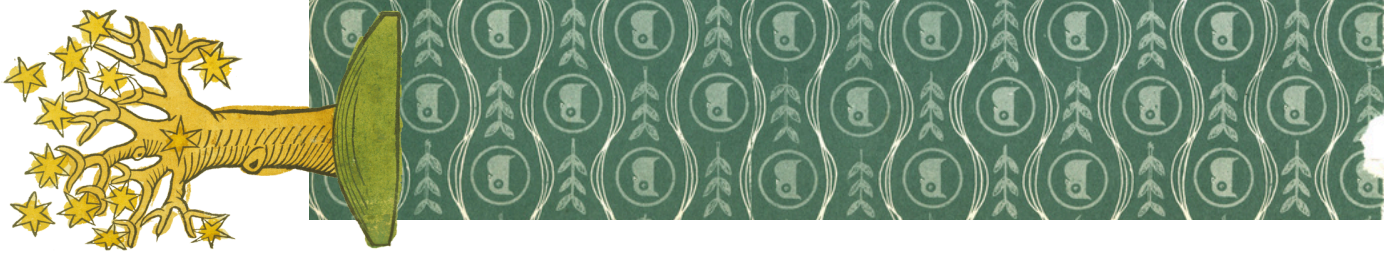
“That art show was the single most successful thing I ever did,” he tells me.

Six years later and he’s something of an underground legend. His shows feature strippers, metal bands, mean mugging wrestlers, cheap beer, glass, nails, needles, and blood. Lots of blood.

Valentine understands what his audience wants, more than technical wrestling they want vibes. The shows remind me more of a haunted house than anything else; a poorly lit room, you’re running around, trying to catch a glimpse of this and that. Blink once and you miss something horrifying. Blink twice and there’s blood on your shoes. The name of the game was throwing everything at the wall and seeing what stuck, and it better stick, because people start bleeding out fast and you’re running out of lightbulbs to break over your opponents head. Casanova is showman and ringmaster and director, and he knows when to rise and fall and rise again, at all the right times, to invoke redemption and get the crowds going crazy.

What got me hooked on the shows, initially, was the blood. When I attended their show for the first time over the Summer, I had begun to experience the changes that came with an aggressive HRT regime. The first wave of changes were all loss; loss of strength, muscle mass, sex drive. Breasts/hips/the whole package may take up to a year to arrive, might not happen at all. The female form via HRT may be elusive, but the chemical breakdown of the male form is all but guaranteed. When I saw my first deathmatch, and there was a guy chained to a post bleeding profusely out of his forehead, something clicked. I connected with perfect men bleeding and breaking and destroying their bodies with things they could get at Walmart, invoking images of Christ’s suffering. My American dream was alive and well. I was also destroying my male body with things I could get from Wal-Mart, just from the pharmacy.





The feeling at the end of our interview is one of uncertainty. Bleeding weekend after weekend, ringmaster of the blood pageant, Christ rose again and lived forever, Casanova kills himself on repeat. How long can he do this? What does success, or an ending, look like?

He puts his body on the line for mainstream success that hasn't arrived yet. Deathmatch takes a toll on the body, deathmatch is destruction, deathmatch is every inch covered in scars, barbells getting heavier than they used to be, foggy memory, forgotten birthdays.

Deathmatch is the destruction of the male form to reach redemption, taking 6mg of estrogen by mouth daily, staring in the mirror, watching your strength melt away.

Casanova and I destroy ourselves to make space for the new forms we dream of, but the new form never arrives, no mainstream fame, only deep scars. No tits, just atrophied muscles. Useless as a man's body and useless as a woman's, the only thing you can own is the destruction of what you were, uncertain futures on the tip of your tongue.

Casanova leaves every match bleeding and triumphant, and leaves our interview in high spirits about the road ahead. He's confident that he's headed towards fame or sustainability or something close to it. Confident that his own way, the way of the blood pageant, is going to get him there.

Summer nights, freshly washed tank tops now covered in blood, men on the floor, soaked in beer, washed again tomorrow, one step closer, creating something beautiful. Those who enter Casanova Valentine's world enter with uncertainty. Time after time, however, they leave believing in The Blood and the promise of ascension through destruction. And every time I try on a new dress, or take another dose, and feel a little more like a woman- not less like a man but more like a woman, I begin to see the new forms emerge, and I start to believe in The Blood, too.

"Tesco Value"/ worm in the whiskey



**"Holy (after Allen Ginsberg)" /
Nora Laine Herzog**

My body is holy! These hands, these
legs, these hips, all that rests between is
holy!

Joy is holy! Sex is holy! The rising
pleasure I feel in the arms of my lover,
spread-eagled on the sweat-stained
sheets in our greenhouse apartment in
New York City's July heat, is holy!

The tongue is holy! The fingers are
holy! The givers and receivers are
holy! The bodies clinging to each other
as if they are the flight to an Eden
where all discarded things are found,
not desperate but loving, longing,
saving, floating, they too are holy!

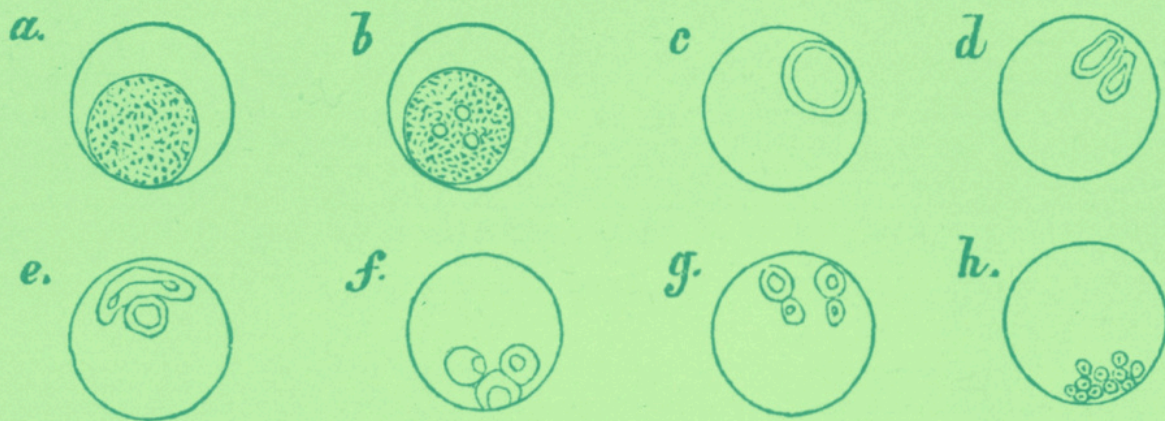
The wet turning earth is holy! The
planting of seeds is holy! The watering,
the fertilizing, the process of growing is
holy! My growing too is holy! My
growing into is holy! My becoming and
rooting and sprouting and flowering is
holy! This body is a flowering fruit
tree! I go through cycles that are holy! I
am alive and sleeping by turns and all is
holy! I put on new layers, marking each
year, and this passage is holy! I grow
weathered and holy! I grow twisted
and holy! I stoop and bend and creak,
but my fruit is just as sweet and holy!





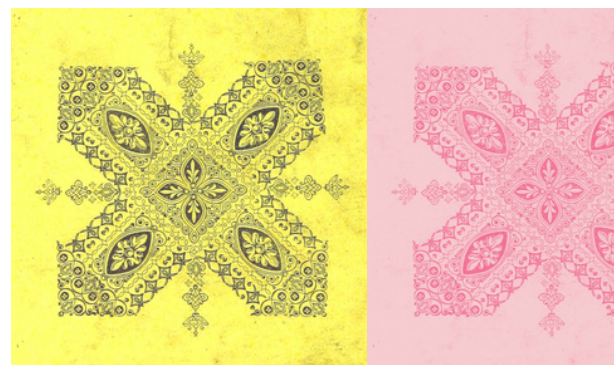
My gifts are holy! My arms which give you hugs are holy! My mouth which calls you “love” is holy! My heart which beats faster in your presence is holy! My voice which tumbles and cracks, spilling hot and fervent over endless possibilities it cannot speak is holy! My eyes which see your light are holy! My trunk which loves your warmth is holy! My being is holy! My love is holy! As you are holy! As we are holy together!

O how holy are our forever magnificent small selves!



"an experiment (holobiont)" / dash pinheiro

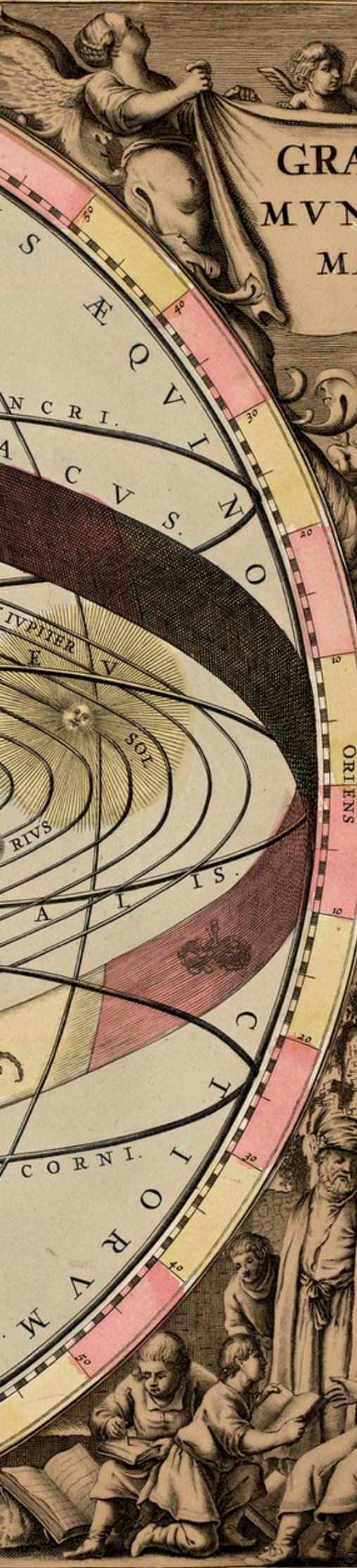
i ran headfirst into a star. gut feeling.
 i can't tell you what happened next
 but i will tell you what happened
 before: i was filled with language
 of a world so entwined that the
 smallest parts were immense
 on their own. (like a lyric fit for
 a worn-through pocket of mind.
 a line that moves you, but is not
 a star. is not something hot and
 calling. patient and not waiting
 anyway. anyway—



—back to the star—
 body. what happened.
 and what became.)

my body was a tuning fork crude and ripe for harmony.
 my surface rippled with a lake meeting rain. my cells
 hummed with reunion. when it stopped (did it stop?)
 the hands of the clock writhed onwards. they reached
 for me. but i was already gone. i had a star to run into.





someone i love spun me into learnings on gut bacteria and consciousness. findings we know but need to search for anyway: to be anything is a question enrobing trillions of relations so heavy with communication and need. the spirits. the bodies across oceans of forgetting and finding. the life-forms that curve against our edges and break them open like a singing jaw. the beyond-conception. the here. the happening anyway.

count them all, call them all.

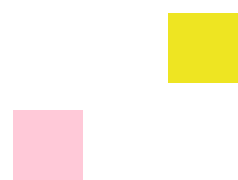
yes, it is strange to know so little about what it so animating.

yes, it is strange to know.

knowing and not knowing have elements of fiction.

another gut feeling.

the space for artistry thickens.



**"Searching The Past for Answers //
The Lady from Llyn y Fan Fach" /
Isaac Sinclair**

As a knee's joint twitches before a storm,
I see her in my mirror,
Water pooling around muddied feet, face forlorn.

Moonlight, hanging off her in a silken dress,
Fabric flutters 'gainst raised, unfeeling nipples,
Is her gown sewn from the silkworm scars of my knees and
chest?

I pull her closer, avoiding silver eyes,
The smell of bracken, a waft of muggy air.
She pulls me tight, my bones letting out heavy sighs.

Graceful fingers reach into my twisting core,
(she is a forest, disorientating)
A fire lights, branches crack, and I am finally sure –

In the stiffness of my body is a question,
Half whisper, a gust of wind off a quiet lake,
I must not ask for too much, revealing self-obsession.

She knows I am the changeling child snatched from my mother's
hips,
Our faces mirrored (stubbled, soft),
And so she graces me with a response from her bloodied lips –

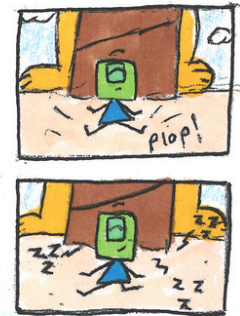
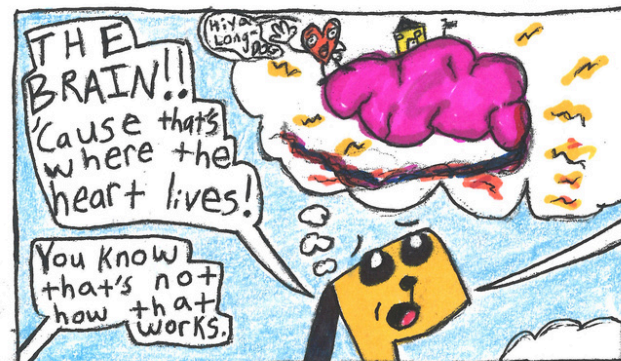
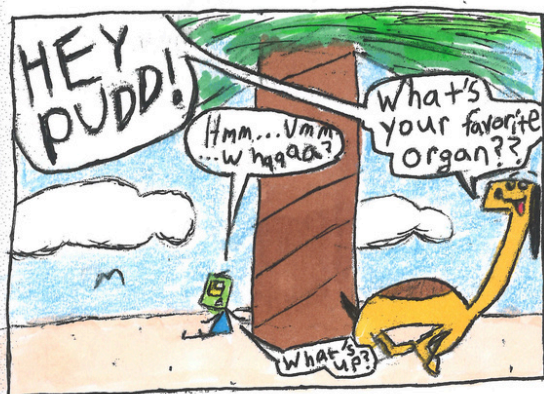
Clashing with my iron teeth, I cower beneath my curiosity,
Failing to heed the lessons of the blessed fool,
Who was met with nothing but violent generosity,
When gently he dipped Dewey-toed shoe into the mushroom
ring, following the call.





"The Wild World of of Long-Dog and Pudd" /

SG Egan



"Dirtfag Is An Empty Apartment" / Calum Robertson

Today all the rooms in our home feel strangers

I wonder what makes me feel so out of place

"What Are Those Things (With Big Black Wings)" - Roger Miller

Dirtfag's spent the morning wondering if the walls taste Mr Clean's sharpish lemon-bite. They stop their tongue from flicking a bead dribble from that inviting spout. But this nest smells too clean. Too crisp. It's not the missing furniture. Not someone else's hair clogging the drains, filling the cobwebs with garlands to a different beating heart. Not even the dust lines showing where something was and where someone shed skin, invisible as it fell, visible in collected gatherings. Look at their snakeskin shed! Dirtfag hasn't been here long enough to coalesce the necessary dust; peel off your Dirtfag, drag themself through each room, introduce the floors to your wry blonde hairs, the curvature of bitten fingernails, crusties from piercings dabbled-formations scooting across the boards. Shakespeare in the bathroom.

Twin toothpaste stains scheme to never fall from porcelain edges. They taunt gravity, a soaked sponge, even Dirtfag's bentback thumbnail. Scrape, see there's no worth in fondling this stranger's spittle. Not like they know. Dirtfag could make magic of the debris. They won't. They'd rather clean the coffee table, cleanse the apartment like their mother would. Folk magic taught by Martha Stewart and Sally MacLennae on a borrowed stereo somewhere beneath a mesh of Dirtfag's childhood memories. Just let stones grow along the basin. Nature features, run the tap all morning, Dirtfag doesn't pay for water. Nobody should but somebody does and so they do, but indirect enough to not taste that sharp lemon tang of credit card bills and stormclouds smearing east-facing windows. There's nothing quite like the rush of water too clear to be seen. Toothpaste peaks will not succumb. Watch nothing melt. There's an incomplete feeling, in Dirtfag. Empty apartment.



On the balcony, three pigeons budge the line and shit on the windows. Windex scent on a hot heavy wind drew them. Another taunt. Everything's talking, and Dirtfag's too out of it to really listen. They're feeling it all, though. In their ribs. Rattle, sternum, rattle, talk with the pigeons, taunt in turn those toothpaste globs, chant a new spell of indifference with the spiders balling up that last tenant's hair. Taste Windex and lemon and war in flurries of feathers, wings aren't worth the fighting but beaks might be. See how a pretty magpie prince makes of night a blade, in the middle of today. Dirtfag wants no part in these skirmishes. They're just happy to leave crumbs on the railings. Pigeons saunter off, bobbing down on gravity's gain. Toothpaste peaks remain.

Dirtfag sits on the floor. With no furniture, there's not much else to do. So they ponder and wonder at the ceiling streaks. Stare too long into landlord white and you'll see Jesus with a saucy wink, aimed right into a fragile soul. Don't fall in love, Dirtfag, you've only just moved here. Summer's retreat is sounding. Wait for close of fall's salvos, then find God in a cozy hearth, a cottage home. Or a sixth floor walk-up. Don't lick the cleaning fluids, Dirtfag. Brew yourself a potion. Don't drink that either. Dirtfag knows what to do, they just need a wee breather, see?

They're walking in the building's shadow, now. Scent of pine on their sneaker's heels. Feel soul in the sole and so forth, wonder what fish these gutters might catch. Downtown flickers on the horizon, a skunk runs across a lawn. See gravel fold into itself a billion suns unnamed by the creators grown weary from a 9-to-5. That's where cement comes from, Dirtfag says to the grey squirrels humping out a lil warmth, on a green fence. Curls of DEEP FOREST in their fur. Don't repaint this place of loving. Sun's behind a cloud so they burrow into one another. And Dirtfag walks alone, tucking their chin deeper under their collar. Past the squirrels, catch up with the skunk, catch a whiff of lemon biting back a warning wind, and walk a bit further. Still too close to the strangers that Dirtfag rents. The apartment. A home not quite known, not yet.



These things come how they must, and so in time so must all things, as it were, as it is, as it's gotta be, guess so, Dirtfag. Guessing so. Someone's cleaning between Dirtfag's ribs. They're whistling, sweeping out the dust. It drifts down, like leaves on snow, landing on sleeves wrinkled. Settle into these fabric folds, don't listen to the tales of what happened to gravel. Not all elements are comparable. Where's the river when you need her? She's sleeping still. She's in skunk veins and squirrel arteries. She's moving in, into Dirtfag. They've got to write up a lease. And with a handshake, Dirtfag's full. They feel the pulse. Current's shout, and the moon echoes back, clutched in a magpie beak. A sliver of quartz, rounded at both ends, balanced. Majorette, see them march and spin unfelt waves to feeling. With a shimmer, the magpie soars away. Dirtfag hopes the pigeons won't find that specific moon. They rather like how a moonlit beak-blade glows, at noon in summer's last heaving sigh. Heavy with lavender, light with lemon.

Dirtfag drifts deeper into their walls. They swim in lemon sharp scents. They grip the moon in a borrowed beak and bow to the midday heat. There is a beauty in the outdoors folded inside, the inside drooping off the balcony, grazing the tops of telephone poles. Watch the pigeons as they come to perch along the toothpaste knobs on the points of each rib, lining Dirtfag's chest. They turn to face a door. They turn themselves inward. They turn and they trust and they flutter with feathers that stop biting. Only lavender. Let lemon fade. And Dirtfag does.



**"forward this email to at least ten people or else
She will come for You, too" / Melisa Ferati**

like a bird She sings
Neptunian being
at the mercy of countless perspectives
naïve, free form in blue
under veiled sight becomes
the Scapegoat strapped to a ruse collapsing
and so, She fell
thinking of home

Carmen, Carmen
deified in misremembrance, you lament from tethered bone – I feel
You in mine
eyes betrayed by pins and needles can't help it when I cry
a promise to never forget

[Timelapse of a wound healing]

The mouth is a private arena
but room for interpretation forms public forum
a permanent facet of legacy
At its core what we leave behind is
the myth of self

God help me a fragmented mirror
God help me! Seems I've laid out the path of a martyr
Will you remember me
or imagine?



"Vessel" / Hanon Gordon

Squeezing
Poking
Picking
Scratching
Rubbing
Touching
Pulling
Squishing
Flicking

Lifting
Moving
Adjusting
Examining
Weighing
Debating

Whether or not after much

Surveying
Evaluating
Assessing
And
Pondering

If I'm happy

Content

Satisfied with what

I See and feel

When I'm

Looking
Studying
Gazing
Regarding

And observing my form

This form

This body

This vessel

This
These limbs

Arms

Legs

Toes

Hands

Fingers

Thumbs

Belly

Bum

These appendages

Chest

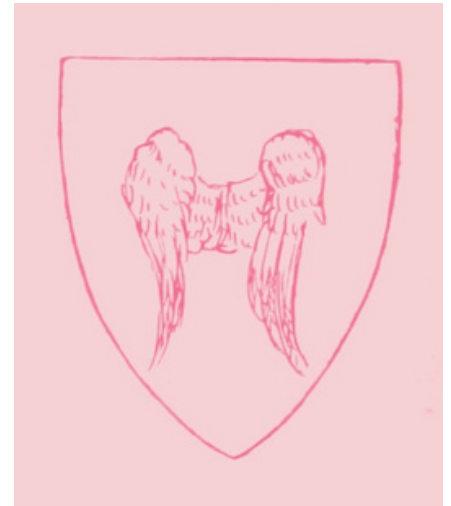
Breasts?

Shoulder

Shoulder

Knee

Knee



And I wonder if

I will ever feel free

Or at least like me

In this body

Until I remember it was mine to make a home in

So I'll continue

Pinching

Prodding

Plucking

Stroking

Erasing

Tracing

Maybe embracing, slowly but surely

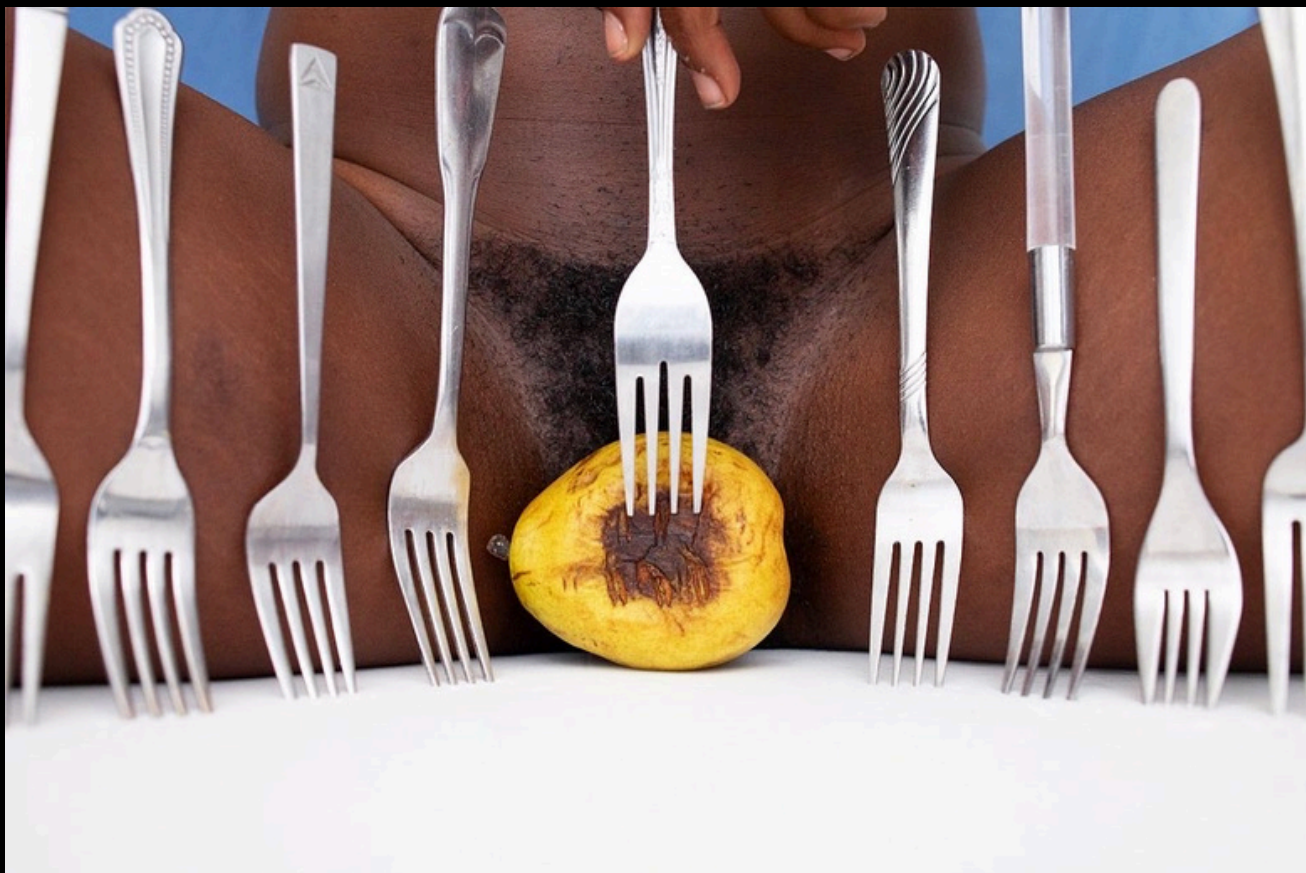
This form

This body

This vessel



From "Tot to Cox" / *teniola funmi*

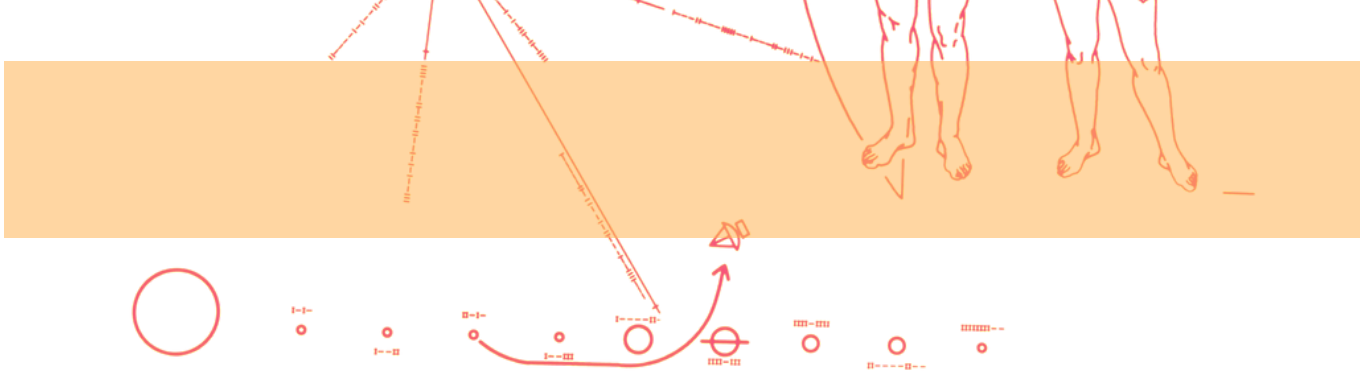






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"Explosive Dreaming"/ moon đặng

Wind chimes drape together like our braided hands in a beat of explosive dreaming. My fingers urging and begging themselves to dance across the skin, your skin, freckle to freckle in repetitive circles. Our shadows cast themselves on the bedroom walls by the warmth peeking through the windowpane. Splotches, dewdrops, and morning glow. You brush the hair out of my face and softly kiss my eyelids close. Right eye, then left eye, then sweetly on the tip of my nose. Goosebumps send electric thrills of safety through my body.

The sun is so warm, your lips are so soft.

We lay back down on the washed out linen plaid sheets. My eyes are holding yours.

"Hi em," you smile at me.

"Hi anh," I smile back.

You place your hand on my cheek, I place my hand on your heart. thump-thump. You tuck your hand under my ear and cradle the back of my neck. You play with my velvet ear lobe, metal dangling in its center.

I bring myself closer to your chest and place my ear over it. thump-thump. The heart grows louder. I close my eyes and I can almost hear the matter floating in your body.

I trace my fingers on the post-surgery scars on your chest, "Is it still sore?"

"It's better now that the drains are out, but it's a bit uncomfortable for me to lift my arms still," you attempt to stretch your arms, but they stop horizontally and can't go past your shoulders.

Thump.

Thump.



The rhythmic beat is expanding, enveloping me into the walls of your heart. I can imagine myself shrunk down to miniature me, sitting in the middle of your heart room. I would bring the quilted blanket you made me, the one with cyanotype prints of your chanh drawings all sewn together and stuffed with the fluff we recycled from my old teddy bears. I'll go barefoot, but with socks of course, I wouldn't want to step in your heart and make it dirty with my outside shoes. I'll cuddle up into the corner of your heart's apex. I can see the coronary arteries wrapping around the room.

Pulsating.

"Your heart was speaking to me," I open my eyes and let myself come back to the warm room we're in.

"Was it?"

I look up at you.

"Babe, your nose is bleeding"

You touch your nose and blood gets on your hands. "It's probably nothing." You attempt to wipe it away but blood keeps pouring out in streams.

"It's still bleeding," I scramble to look for something to help you wipe your nose. "Don't tilt your head back. You need to let the blood drip out!" I yell as I run to the kitchen to grab some napkins.

I come back to the bed.

"Oh, fuck."



The blood on your nose hardens into a block of red on your upper lip, blood trickles out from the corners of your eyes down to your chest where your heart is protruding with every beat.

Skin Stretched.

Thump Thump.

Scars Unraveling.

Thump Thump.

Your heart devours its way through skin and bones, your body swells like a balloon pumped with air then deflates as your heart reveals itself.

Your heart speaks to me.

Hi em.

For context, em, anh, and chanh are Vietnamese pronouns that are similar to the “you” in English. The pronoun em is used when you’re speaking to someone younger than you and can have endearing/romantic connotations. Anh and chị are used for those who are older than you, but still young in the general sense. They also indicate the gender of the person, anh being used for men and chị being used for women.

Chanh as used in “the chanh drawing” is a combination of the binary pronouns that some Vietnamese youth have adopted as a way to create a more gender neutral pronoun. It also happens to mean lemon.

Although these words are of a different language and would make sense for them to be italicized for easier distinction, I personally don’t believe in the distancing of foreign languages as something to be Other’d in order to make clear the language a piece is predominantly written in, hence why I’ve made the executive decision to have them exist in this space naturally.

GUTS, issue ii
was a zine by



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